

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

ADMINISTRATIVE ISSUANCE SYSTEM

Mayor's Memorandum 2004-3
August 2, 2004

TO: ALL DEPARTMENT AND AGENCY HEADS

ORIGINATOR: Anthony A. Williams, Mayor

Anthony A. Williams

SUBJECT: Guidelines on Scheduling Work and Granting Time Off to Allow District Government Employees to Participate in Volunteer Activities under the Sponsorship and Scope of *Serve DC*

I. READ WITH ME: A PROJECT OF *THE EARLY CHAPTERS*

It is the vision of the District government that all children in the District of Columbia will read at or above grade level by the third grade. In order to bring this vision to fruition, *The Early Chapters* has been established. *The Early Chapters* is a children literacy program located within *Serve DC*, Executive Office of the Mayor.

- A. *Read with Me* is a project of *The Early Chapters* that has been developed to increase literacy-focused volunteerism for adults with children ages 0-8. *Read with Me* matches District government employees as volunteers with non-profit or District government-based volunteer early childhood literacy programs in the District of Columbia. The design of the programs varies, but includes reading, tutoring, mentoring, and web-based pen pal opportunities.
- B. As *The Early Chapters* expands, it will also include additional components such as: public awareness campaigns; parent and family literacy education and skill building opportunities; large-scale book drives and give-away events; literacy festivals; and other special events. District government employees will have the ability to volunteer for specific events and campaigns as they launch.
- C. Information about *The Early Chapters* can be obtained by calling *Serve DC* at (202) 727-7925, or by e-mailing earlychapters@dc.gov.

II. GUIDELINES FOR SCHEDULING WORK AND GRANTING TIME OFF FOR VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES

The following guidelines support the efforts of District government departments and agencies in encouraging employee participation in the volunteer activities described in this Memorandum. Each department and agency should also review any other applicable regulations or policies, as well as collective bargaining agreements, before making determinations on these matters.

A. Scheduling Work and Granting Time Off

The District's personnel system provides departments and agencies with flexibility in scheduling hours of work and time off. Each department and agency is encouraged to make appropriate use of this flexibility in responding to requests for changes in work schedules or time off to allow employees to engage in the volunteer activities described in this Memorandum, while giving due consideration to the effect of each employee absence or change in duty schedule on work operations and productivity. The following are some of the options:

- (1) **Available Work Schedules – Flexible or alternative work schedules** may be established for employees who wish to engage in volunteer activities during normal work hours. District government employees represented by labor organizations may participate in a flexible or alternative work schedule only as specified in collective bargaining agreements. To determine how a flexible or alternative work schedule may be implemented, department and agencies should review the District Personnel Manual (DPM), Chapter 12 – Hours of Work, Legal Holidays and Leave, Part II, Subpart 2, Weekly and Daily Scheduling of Work.
- (2) **Scheduling Time Off from Work** – District government employees seeking to participate in volunteer activities during basic work hours may be granted annual leave, leave without pay, or, in very limited and unique circumstances, excused absence (administrative leave), as specified below:
 - (a) *Annual Leave* – Departments and agencies should be as accommodating as possible in reviewing and approving employee requests for annual leave to perform volunteer service, consistent with the procedures in DPM Chapter 12 – Hours of Work, Legal Holidays, and Leave, Part II, Subpart 6, Annual and Sick Leave and Compensatory Time.
 - (b) *Leave Without Pay (LWOP)* – At the discretion of the department or agency, LWOP may be granted to employees who wish to engage in volunteer activities during normal work hours. As with annual leave, whenever possible, departments and agencies are encouraged to act favorably upon these requests. However, it is noted that LWOP is appropriate for extended periods only if the employee is expected to return to his or her job at the end of the period of LWOP. Departments and agencies should review their internal policies on LWOP and applicable collective bargaining agreements, if any.
 - (c) *Excused Absence (administrative leave)* – Each department and agency has discretion to excuse employees from their duties without loss of pay or charge to leave (not more than 8 hours in a workday) for volunteer activities. However, it is recommended that the granting of excused absence

for volunteer activities be limited to those situations in which the employee's absence, as determined by the department or agency, is not specifically prohibited by law or regulation, and satisfies one (1) or more of the following criteria:

- (1) The absence is directly related to the agency's mission;
- (2) The absence is officially sponsored or sanctioned by the department or agency head;
- (3) The absence will clearly enhance the professional development or skills of the employee in his or her current position; or
- (4) The absence is brief and is determined to be in the best interest of the department or agency.

Ultimately, it is the responsibility of each department and agency head to balance support for employee volunteer activities with the need to ensure that employee work requirements are fulfilled and that department and agency operations are conducted efficiently and effectively. Each department and agency should review its internal guidelines on excused absence and applicable collective bargaining agreements.

III. LABOR-MANAGEMENT RELATIONS

Department and agency officials are reminded that, to the extent required or permitted by law, regulation, or collective bargaining agreements, conditions of employment (such as work schedules) of employees covered under collective bargaining agreements shall not be changed without prior notification to official labor representatives. Moreover, employees covered under collective bargaining agreements may participate in flexible or alternative work schedules only as specified in the collective bargaining agreement. For additional information on these matters, department and agency officials should contact the Office of Labor Relations and Collective Bargaining at (202) 724-4953.

IV. PROHIBITION ON COERCION

While department and agency officials may encourage District government employees to become more involved in volunteer activities, employees shall not be coerced into participating in volunteer activities or into relinquishing any entitlements concerning flextime or alternative work schedules for the purpose of volunteering, or for any other purpose.

V. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST AND HATCH ACT RESTRICTIONS

Departments, agencies and employees are reminded that conflict of interest laws and related regulations governing outside employment for compensation also apply to District government employees who engage in volunteer activities. Restrictions under the Hatch Act apply to employees on duty status, as well as to employees on paid or unpaid leave.

VI. USE OF GOVERNMENT FACILITIES AND EQUIPMENT

Employees may not use District government facilities or equipment for other than authorized purposes; and must obtain supervisory approval for the use of any government facilities or equipment before engaging in any volunteer activities.

VII. VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION

Departments and agencies are encouraged to recognize employees who volunteer their skills to help others. However, providing monetary awards or paid time off to employees in recognition for their volunteer activities undermines the “volunteer spirit” in which these employees donated their personal time and efforts for the benefit of others. On the other hand, granting appropriate citations, letters of appreciation, or small mementos such as pins or mugs, is appropriate as a sign of the department’s or agency’s recognition of the services rendered to the community by its employees.

VIII. EFFECTIVE DATE

The provisions of this Memorandum are effective immediately.